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TAGS: [GH](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: GHANA: DEFENSE MINISTER ASKS USG TO "DISCUSS  
AFRICOM DISCRETELY"

REF: ACCRA 429

Classified By: Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater for reasons 1.4 d and e

¶1. (C) Ghanaian Minister of Defense Kwame Addo Kufuor and Ambassador met one-on-one at the Minister's request on February 26 at the Defense Ministry. Addo Kufuor recalled his strong and positive personal regard for the United States, and the positive and strong military to military relations our two nations share. The Minister added that if he were to live in another country other than Ghana, it would be the United Kingdom or the United States. He then stressed Ghana's willingness to be a partner with the United States in every way to ensure peace, security and safety in Ghana and on the African continent. Turning to the USG's recent announcement of the formation of an Africa Command, Addo Kufuor recalled that Ghana and the U.S. had shared positive military experiences and exchanges over the years. He noted in particular activities at the Takoradi Naval Base, the Jungle Warfare Center, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Center, ACRI/ACOTA training, senior leadership training, support for peacekeeping operations around Africa and in the world, maritime security and training, the State Partnership Program, and other engagements.

¶2. (C) As he has told the Ambassador previously, Addo Kufuor said he expected the United States to be a partner that would assist in shoring up Ghana's military preparedness with equipment as, as well as training, conferences and assessments, particularly in the maritime arena. Ambassador reminded the Minister that DAO has prepared a comprehensive needs assessment of Ghana's military and was actively looking at possibilities within USG resource capabilities, and at mechanisms to address most effectively Ghana's concerns/requests/requirements. The Minister said he was happy to hear this.

¶3. (C) Addo Kufuor spoke next about ethnic tensions in Ghana ) the north-south divide as he characterized it, and alluded to problems that could occur if these issues are not handled sensitively and carefully. He recalled that while there is religious tolerance in Ghana, there is always the concern that an Islamic-Christian schism could develop. Returning to the subject of AFRICOM, the Minister expressed the need for the U.S. to move carefully, prudently and consultatively on establishing this command. While accepting the efficacy of having a command dedicated specifically to the African continent, Addo Kufuor voiced concern that USG military and civilian policy makers engage their African counterparts before and not after decisions are made. He specifically urged that Ghanaians, as good, loyal, partners, have the opportunity to dialogue and provide input to U.S. policy makers to avoid mistaken notions

about the Africa Command, and to insure that the establishment of this command does not fuel religious divisions and enhance tensions. The Minister stated unequivocally and repeatedly that discussions about AFRICOM must be handled &discreetly8 with Ghana and other nations, and ~ in the press8. Ambassador expressed appreciation for the Minister,s frank assessment and comments. She assured Addo Kufuor that USG policy makers, both military and civilian, would be visiting African capitals to solicit input and feedback on AFRICOM.

¶4. (C) Comment: Addo Kufuor was sending the USG a clear message: Ghana is capable being the headquarters in Africa for AFRICOM, but don,t make pre-determined plans for Ghana or for other potential African sites unilaterally. He clearly is concerned and believes we are doing just that. He also is reflecting concerns of and input from his service chiefs, and of the Presidency. With presidential elections set for 2008, the GOG does not want any action to take place that will &rock the boat8, cause further ethnic tensions or jeopardize the elections for the NPP. End comment.  
BRIDGEWATER